1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 F· Hahn MR13
Silva

endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye.

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation.

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action.

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success.

Another interesting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the [illegible] patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951), 1954
MR13 Fellahin MK13
Silwa

be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras).

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her.

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards.

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'.

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive.

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardised system of organisation of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. 220.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her foot-prints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

454 It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessèd be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb.

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1]

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

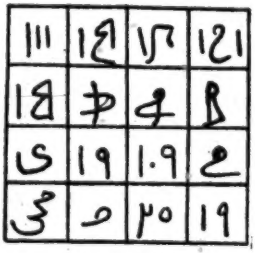

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue.

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.

[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

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Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

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over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *'omdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

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[789]

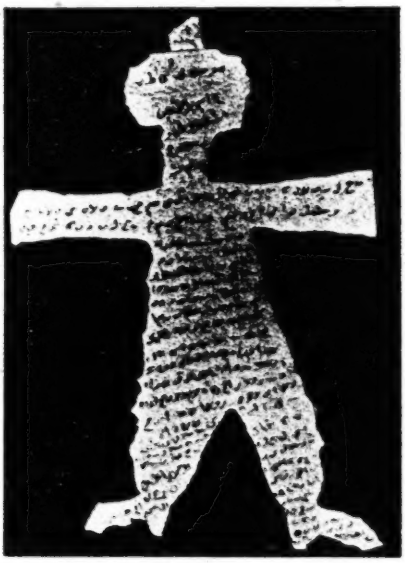

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

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I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

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To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *ʿafrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *ʿafrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *ʿafrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

787 685 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291] [342] [350]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. [152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

● 754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also

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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again.

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye.

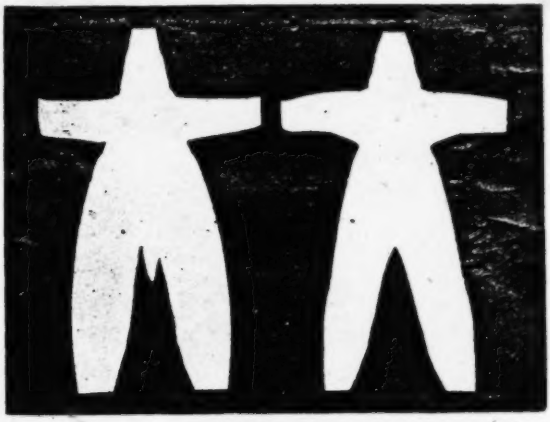

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them.

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion!

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

754 755 855 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 755 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water [576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses- [576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 754 755 753 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

SUPERSTITIONS

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
781 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[774] [1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *ḫarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat.

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home.

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good!

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof.

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire.

F 755 [825] 776 774

F [753]

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

832 754 If a man loves a woman and wants to marry her, and she has no affection for him, he asks a female friend to assist him in the following way. The friend visits the woman at a time when she is likely to be combing her hair. It is the custom for women to conceal all their hair-combings in the wall of one of the rooms, between the bricks. The friend notices where the woman puts her hair-combings, and, at the first opportunity, steals some of the hair when the owner is not present, and gives it to the man. He takes it to a magician, who measures the length of each hair by the span of his hand. The magician then writes a spell, and, going to a grave, puts the hair inside it, keeping the spot a secret, for no one must know where the hair is hidden. He puts the spell in his pocket, and on some pretext or other (he may ask her for a cup of coffee, for example) visits the house of the woman whose hair he has buried. While he is sitting in her house he will produce the paper on which he has written the spell, and tell her to wear it [789] under her arm, stating that it will afford her excellent protection in the event of anyone else writing a spell against her to prevent her marrying. He thus persuades her to accept his spell, hinting that it may also bring her a good husband. The woman, of course, has no idea that the magician is in league with the man who wants to marry her. She accordingly accepts the spell, hangs it round her neck, and, immediately becoming madly in love with the man who is in love with her, is, of course, only too glad to marry him! This is a very common practice in many parts of Egypt.

754 789 It is also the custom to protect houses from the evil eye, and various decorations are employed for this purpose. Sometimes a plate or saucer is plastered into the wall just above the main entrance, or pieces of old carving, picked up from an ancient rubbish-mound, may be let into the masonry round about the door. The horns of sheep and other animals are also hung over the doorway as a charm to protect the house from the evil eye. A 'bride of the corn,' as already stated,[1] is hung over the front door for the same purpose. Inside the house, on the walls of the living-rooms, I have seen painted designs which the owner told me were put there to keep off the evil eye. Indeed, the devices resorted to for protecting houses, fields, animals, and people of all ages against this dreaded power are multitudinous, and to describe all those that I am acquainted with would require an entire book.

[1] See p. 172.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 304

priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kȝ*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḫ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmeh[illegible]t, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

A [113]

[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Ehevertrage aus vorsaïtischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(41)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give 792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a 842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues 777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A [765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of [767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*) 535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(41a).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the 538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac- [534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever.

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day...

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate.

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'."

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered.

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity.

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye.

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their place again. 755

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22]. [164]

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a *jinnī*. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the inter-penetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to 751 754 753 176

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḥīḳ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce;* and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

754 753 756 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sīrāf [?] (جان سيراف),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalīfa*) of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or " bewitched " according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle ?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands leaving between them a distance which he measures with his finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Muḫāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Muḫāhara bi'l-Bāḏingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bāḏingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
757 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

" When the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *shabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: ' Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Fakīh*[1] of their village was " envying " children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, " Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī ! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now ! " So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, " Oh, you fat camel ! " [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance!)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium (" influencer ") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the " enchanter " to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But " in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him!). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

except in Allah ! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who " envied " you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory ; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an " old wife " who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the " Envied " and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the " Envied " poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

AT the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows :

Oh, fine salt ! Oh, chaste substance !
Your mother is free ; your father, fine !
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains !
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die !

[1] [The *'Ashūrā'* is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XX

SHAHḲA

F 164

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahḳa* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahḳa* (injury by the evil eye) or *naẓra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

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The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

E 759 208

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [columba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little the soft paste is taken and

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy."

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīneh* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant,